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## MICROSCOPY.

TEST OBJECTS. AMPLIFIER.—Why I think little of the Podura as a test, is, that it requires a skilled microscopist to appreciate it for that purpose, and a skilled microscopist can judge of the value of a lens by its performance on any object. Test-objects are of most use to a beginner, and if he does not know exactly what he ought to see, a skilled showman can make them both a delusion and a snare.

I might perhaps add to the working distance question that a concave lens inserted in the body of the microscope as an amplifier, will give increased working distance to any objective, and if we have to deal with a cover just too thick to focus through without it, the insertion of the concave will enable us to focus through at once—within limits, of course. If a flint lens, it does not much interfere with definition, and is sometimes of use to overcome the difficulty.—*Edwin Holmes in English Mechanic and World of Science.*

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## SCIENTIFIC NEWS.

— Dr. James Lewis, the well-known conchologist, died of apoplexy, at his home at Mohawk, N. Y., February 23, 1881. He was born at Schuyler's lake, Otsego Co., New York, in July, 1822. He was, therefore, nearly 59 years of age at the time of his death. Like many another who has become distinguished in natural science, his earlier education was confined chiefly to the common school. At the age of twenty-four he began to read medicine, and prosecuted his studies for some three years, when he became interested in dentistry, and abandoning the broad field of general medicine, devoted himself to this special branch of medical science. For this he was eminently fitted by his great mechanical skill, and to the implements employed in his art he contributed many permanently valuable improvements. It is as a naturalist that we have to consider Dr. Lewis. He became interested in nature in his childhood, and that interest deepened with years into admiration, and admiration into love, which led him to intelligent, untiring pursuit. It was while he resided in Boston, Massachusetts, from 1849 to 1851 that he became interested in his favorite science and formed the nucleus of what was to become one of the most valuable private collections of American land and fresh-water shells extant. From that time until a year or two previous to his death, he was a most devoted student and untiring enthusiastic collector. He is widely known to the authorities in the science he cultivated by a very extensive correspondence, of which art Dr. Lewis was certainly a master. Within the scope of his acquaintance are embraced all the living names familiar to the younger naturalists, and many others who have passed away. His published works, when the magnitude of his labors